

ARGUMENTS/REMARKS

Response to rejections based on prior art

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-22 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by McConnell (US 5,436,957), cited by applicants.

Claims 1, 12 and 16 are independent claims.

Claim 1, as indicated above, has been amended to more clearly present the subject of the claim.

In general, claim 1 of the present application relates to a method for managing the configuration of calling services for a person having a plurality of telephone devices (e.g., home telephone, mobile telephone, pager, IP telephony) each associated with a network entity that provides the calling service for that telephone device. As mentioned in the specification, p. 1, lines 10-12, "many individuals are nearly overwhelmed by the effort required to manage the incoming and outgoing calls on these multiple telephone lines," and although enhanced services (call forwarding, repeat dial, call blocking, distinctive ring) are available to customers, "the services as presently offered are generally not as useful as they could be due to the difficulty in coordinating these features across multiple lines and/or devices . . . , and the resulting limited customization options." (P. 2, lines 8-11)

In accordance with claim 1, the configuration method comprises receiving a request from the subscriber to configure a calling service, determining the individual configuration changes that are required to fulfill the subscriber's request for each telephone device of the plurality of devices, and distributing the individual configuration changes for each telephone device to the network entity that provides the calling service for that telephone device.

It is respectfully submitted that McConnell does not disclose or suggest the step of "distributing the individual configuration changes for each telephone device to the

network entity that provides the calling service for that telephone device” as recited in claim 1.

A basis for this language is found in the specification, e.g., at p. 7, line 19, to p. 8, line 3. The specification describes how, for instance, calling services respectively for a subscriber’s home phone and the subscriber’s mobile phone might each be handled by a different switch. To accommodate this situation, a database according to embodiments of the present invention could include data on how to contact the entity (e.g., a switch as above) responsible for a service serving a particular device. As further described, based on the information in the database, individual service change information could be distributed to each entity.

McConnell discloses an arrangement where a subscriber has service from the network entity on several lines to be used by the subscriber’s employees or customers (the example is given of an airline company providing phones for selective use of its customers at an airline lounge when a flight is delayed). It is not contemplated that the users of these phones have the ability to configure services, only the subscriber who makes the phone available to the subscriber’s customers. Similarly, it is not contemplated that services on the subscriber’s phone lines will be coordinated to a plurality of telephone devices belonging to the user for the user’s convenience in managing calls on the plurality of devices. Rather, the subscriber has a need to change service requirements on a recurring basis (employees move or leave, different flights on different days are delayed) and McConnell provides an arrangement where the single centralized Integrated Service Control Point (ISCP) database that provides the calling service for all telephone devices on the network and that stores the service requirements for all phones on the network, can be accessed by the subscriber directly to make changes.

The disclosure of McConnell is silent with respect to the step of “distributing the individual configuration changes for each telephone device to the network entity that provides the calling service for that telephone device.” In McConnell, individual service change information is not distributed to entities each respectively intended to handle

services to a different telephone device as recited in claim 1. Instead, a subscriber configures access to a group of lines for the subscriber's customer, where the lines are, in effect, subleased to the customers from a network via the subscriber. See, e.g., col. 4, lines 22-26. The centralized Integrated Service Control Point (ISCP) coordinates access parameters entered by a subscriber. See, e.g., col. 3, line 67 to col. 4, line 7. However, McConnell is silent with respect to "distributing the individual configuration changes for each telephone device to a network entity that provides the calling service for that telephone device," as recited in claim 1.

The Office Action refers specifically to the passage in McConnell at col. 15, lines 52-56, for disclosure of "distributing the individual configuration changes for each telephone device to the network entity that provides the calling service for that telephone device," but this passage refers to the sorts of information that can be provided in an activity report to the subscriber. See col. 15, lines 27-29, "The present system can provide the subscriber with Station Message Detail Reports (SMDR) for all calls made from the identified group of the subscriber's lines." The description which follows this sentence describes the various records that are kept which can be included in a report, and concludes with the passage referred to in the Office Action: "The record therefore will indicate when a customer requested communication service, what line the customer used, the product and password used, where the customer called and precisely how the ISCP instructed the SSP to dispose of the call." Nothing in this passage refers to distributing configuration changes anywhere, and particularly distributing changes to the network entity that provides the calling service for that telephone device.

The applicants therefore submit that claim 1, and claims 2-11 dependent thereon, are not anticipated by or obvious in view of McConnell and respectfully request that the rejection be reconsidered and withdrawn. Dependent claim 6, is should be noted, further describes a special case of the arrangement of claim 1, in which the step of distributing includes calling the network entity that provides the calling service for one of the telephone devices and providing the individual configuration changes to the network

entity using dual tone multi-frequency tones. Clearly, McConnell fails to disclose or suggest such a step.

Claim 12 relates to a method for providing calling services which comprises receiving an incoming call directed to a telephone number, determining a first telephone device to which the telephone number is assigned, determining a subscriber to which the first telephone device belongs, retrieving from a database calling service configuration information for a plurality of telephone devices belonging to the subscriber, and determining, based on the retrieved calling service configuration information for a second telephone device, where to direct the incoming call. McConnell discloses only the usual database lookup when an incoming call arrives—the single number to which the call is directed is used to look for directions associated only with that number. Nothing in McConnell suggests the subject matter of claim 12, in which there is retrieval of information for a plurality of telephone devices, and retrieved calling service configuration information for a second telephone device (not the first device to which the telephone number is assigned) is the basis for determining where to direct the incoming call. McConnell completely fails to suggest this aspect of claim 12, or the problem to which it responds—the problem of configuring incoming calls on a plurality of telephone devices belonging to a subscriber who is a user of these devices, rather than a subscriber (as in McConnell) who is a supplier of telephone lines to others.

Reconsideration of the rejection of claim 12, and claims 13-15 dependent thereon, is therefore respectfully requested.

Claim 16 relates to a method for providing calling services comprising receiving an indication from a particular telephone device that a subscriber wants to place a call, identifying the subscriber, retrieving calling service configuration information for a plurality of telephone devices associated with the subscriber, and providing calling services to the subscriber based on the retrieved configuration information for a telephone device other than the particular telephone device from which the subscriber is placing the call. McConnell discloses only the usual database lookup when an outgoing call is made—the single number from which the call is sent is used to look for directions

associated only with that number. Nothing in McConnell suggests the subject matter of claim 16, in which there is retrieval of information for a plurality of telephone devices, and retrieved calling service configuration information for a second telephone device (not the first device to which the outgoing telephone number is assigned) is the basis for determining the calling services to be provided. McConnell completely fails to suggest this aspect of claim 16. Dependent claims 21 and 22, is should be noted, further describe two special cases of the arrangement of claim 16, in which a repeat dial service rings back a telephone device other than the particular telephone device from which the subscriber is placing the call (claim 21) and receiving an indication of an incoming call on a telephone device other than the particular telephone device from which the subscriber is placing the call (claim 22). These features illustrate some of the advantages possible in accordance with the invention and indicate forcefully that the disclosure of McConnell is directed elsewhere.

Reconsideration of the rejection of claim 16, and claims 17-22 dependent thereon, is therefore respectfully requested.

The remaining references, cited but not applied in the rejection of any claim, are Malik (US 6,181,787) and Creswell et al. (US 6,445,783). Neither reference discloses or suggests the features of claims 1, 12 and 16 discussed above.

For the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1-22 are now allowable, and reconsideration and allowance of the claims in this case are respectfully requested. If there are any outstanding issues, the Examiner is invited to contact applicant's attorney at 203-838-8037.

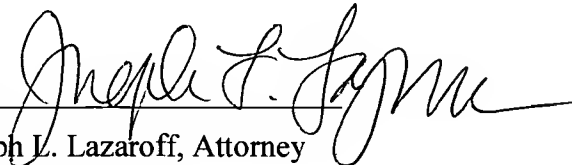
Appln. No. 09/996,645
Amdt. Dated April 18, 2005
Reply to Office Action of December 17, 2004

Docket No. 1999-0549

An associate power of attorney and a change of correspondence address
accompany this response.

Respectfully,

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Date: April 18, 2005

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